

A



S E R M O N,

ON THE DEATH OF

THE

REV. RICHARD MURRAY. D. D.

PROVOST OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, &c. &c.

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF SAID COLLEGE

THE 23d OF JUNE, 1799.

BY

THE REV. RICHARD GRAVES, D. D. F. T. C. D.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sermon is published in compliance with the wishes of some friends of the revered person, whose character it attempts to describe, who were anxious that some memorial however imperfect of such virtue, should remain for private consolation, and general example.

The hope expressed in the close of this Sermon, that his Majesty would in his gracious regard to the University, supply as far as possible the loss it had sustained, by nominating a worthy successor to our late lamented Provost, has been since fulfilled by the appointment of our respected Vice Provost, Dr. JOHN KEARNEY, to that station; an appointment which does equal honour to the prompt recommendation of his Excellency LORD CORNWALLIS, and the immediate and gracious compliance with that recommendation by HIS MAJESTY; and which as it can have proceeded from no motive, but a pure regard to the interests of Literature and Religion, demands the gratitude of every friend to both.

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A S E R M O N, &c.

NUMBERS, Chap. XXIII. V. 10.

*Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let
my last End be like his.*

THIS Prayer expresses the natural wish of every mind the moment death is at all thought of, however distracted by worldly care, plunged in sensuality or even enslaved by vice; however difficult we may find it to live like the righteous, we cannot but wish that we may die like him; that our life may close with the serenity of a mind at peace with God, and that the sadness of Death may be cheered with the hope of a happy immortality.

B

If

If then my fellow Christians, you would form a right estimate of the value of every earthly pursuit, visit the bed of Death; talk to a dying Christian of any object of a mere wordly nature, of the pleasure he has enjoyed, the magnificence he has displayed, or the titles with which he has been dignified; talk to him of these as sources of comfort, at that awful crisis, and how would he receive you; assuredly he would turn from you with horror, as one who came to insult his weakness, and mock his dying Agonies. Expatriate if you will on his genius, his eloquence, his influence, his wealth; then indeed he would listen; but listen with terror, not with triumph, with self-abasement, not with exultation, he would heave perhaps a heart-felt Groan, and cry——“yes, yes, it is too true, “all these talents I have possessed; but gracious “God how have I abused them.”——Would you wish to comfort him indeed, talk to him, if you can with truth, of his piety, his integrity, his humility, his conquest over resentment and ambition, his persevering and
successful

successful exertions in the cause of religion,
 and mercy, and truth; talk to him of the
 poor, whom he has relieved, the young and
 ignorant whom he has instructed; tell him
 that the blessings of the widow and the
 orphan, the prayers of the reformed Sinner,
 and the converted Infidel are his; and then
 you will see a ray of joy illumine the gloom
 of death, you will see the half closed eye
 once more raised to Heaven, suffused with
 the tear of humble gratitude, and brightened
 with the cheerfulness of pious hope. These
 my friends, these are the consolations of
 the Christian at the hour of dissolution;
 Oh! how desirable is such a close to this life
 of trial and uncertainty, how contemptible
 compared with that is every object this world
 can afford. But, Alas! in the pride of prof-
 perity, the thoughtlessness of youth, and the
 vigour of health, we forget all this; of our
 own Death, we cannot bear to think, and in
 proportion as we love others, we forget that
 they too, are mortal, but we are soon roused
 from our stupid lethargy, the object of our
 affection,

affection, our veneration, whose life protracted to a century, would seem too short, sinks into the grave; and we stand upon its brink, surprized and terrified.—Every heart in this assembly feels at this moment this awful sensation; every individual amongst you my Brethren, deplores with me our common guide, our common friend, our common father: while directed and guarded by his paternal care, we were fearless and secure, though full of age as of honour, he seemed to us designed by nature, and by providence, to outlast yet many, many years, but the knell of death has tolled, and startled us from the idle dream. Oh! let us avail ourselves of the awful warning, let us contemplate his character, let us impress his virtues on our memories and our hearts, if haply, we may be led to imitate his example; that we also may “die the death of the righteous, and that our last end be like his.”

I shall not here dwell upon the strength of his understanding, the clearness of his comprehension,

comprehension, or the acuteness of his judgment. I shall not attempt to detail his various attainments in literature, the accuracy of his scientific knowledge, the extent of his theological learning, or his critical acquaintance with the learned languages. I shall not expatiate on his long experience, and intimate knowledge of the institutions, the business and the interests of this University; qualities which so eminently fitted him for its government. It is my duty to fix your attention rather on his moral, than his literary excellence, on the virtues of his heart, more than the preeminence of his talents, that you may be led not merely to admire, but to imitate him, to emulate such virtue, is the duty of all, to equal it, Alas, the lot of few.

Truth, the love of truth, was the great basis of his character, with this then let me begin as the foundation of all his virtues; his sincerity, and singleness of heart. In this I will not hesitate to say, he was indeed pre-eminent, so conspicuous, were artlessness and
sincerity

sincerity in his conduct, his language, his manner; that I scarcely believe any human being was ever yet blind or uncandid enough to suspect him even in a single instance of declaring a feigned purpose with his lips, and concealing the truth in his heart, of acting from one motive, and affecting another, of that petty chicane, that paltry artifice, which professes publick good, and is directed merely by party views, which talks of generosity, and pursues self interest. No man ever yet received from him a compliment undeserved, or could complain of his having excited in him any expectations which it was not his intention, and within his power to fulfil. Oh no! his ingenuous mind soared far above such littlenesses; when drawn forth from his academick seclusion, he mixed with the world, and accidentally was engaged in any scenes, where wordly minded men pursued their fordid schemes of interest, he fled from them with a sort of instinctive horror which could scarcely be overcome even by his anxiety to detect and to defeat all selfish artifice,

artifice ; his spirit shrunk from the foulness of such pollution, to repose itself on its own unfullied purity. And, oh ! what a lustre and clearness did this sincerity and love of truth give to every other excellence of his character ; and how admirably did it fit him for the high station which he filled. Hence was it that all felt and acknowledged that in the disposal of every academick emolument, and the determination of every academick competition, no consideration ever suggested itself to his mind, except the real merit of each competitor, and never did even the prejudice of rivalry suspect, that an indirect motive could possibly influence his decision. As head of this extensive University, what a character was here—this single quality at once put an end to all party, and influence, and interest, crushed worthless presumption that might have hoped to rise by intrigue, and inspired humble unfriended, unconnected merit, with the fullest confidence.

This

This gave to his opinion in the disposal of the highest academick honours and rewards a weight which suited his high station.—It was well known that his talents were sound, his information extensive, and his judgement discriminating, and it was absolutely certain that his judgement was exercised to discover truth in every point with the most scrupulous anxiety, and with unmixed sincerity.—Hence no suspicion of injustice embittered the vexation of disappointment—The self exaltation of self love submitted to his arbitration without a murmur, and even the petulance of vanity was shamed into silence.

The same sincerity was so conspicuous in his general demeanour, that those little marks of attention and politeness, which from other men attract scarce any notice, and make scarce any impression, were from him received with lively pleasure, and remembered with complacency and gratitude, because they were known to proceed from the heart and from the heart alone—such is the value of sincerity,

ty, such the importance of the love of truth, when it terminates not in the pursuit of idle theories and frivolous speculations, but regulates the conduct and forms the heart, it guards and exalts, it gives prominence and decision, firmness and solidity, to every excellence and every virtue; without it, all is false and hollow and vain and worthless—"the double minded man is unstable in all his ways."—This is what the searcher of hearts describes when he declares, "if your eye be single then is your whole body full of light, but if the light that is in thee is darkness, how great is that darkness."—Yes my young friends be like this our revered guide and model, be sincere lovers of veracity, flee from duplicity, from wordly artifice, from cunning and from craft, so shall you live like him respected of man, and die like him approved of God.

Another leading virtue distinguished this revered person in a still greater degree than even that eminent sincerity which we have already

dy noticed—*unfeigned humility*,—never perhaps did any man possessing such superior mental powers appear more entirely unconscious of his superiority, never did any man labour more steadily and successfully to acquire the most extensive information and the most decided pre-eminence in that difficult science which as it was his duty so it was his delight to cultivate (for with him to see his duty and to deem its discharge his highest gratification were one and the same thing) yet never did any human being feel, I do not say so little ambition to display this superior knowledge, but so rooted an aversion from every thing in the remotest degree like display, when his duty did not indispensably require it—In truth it is to be lamented that he did not feel more strongly his own pre-eminence, and that his unwillingness to attract public notice prevented him from offering his literary labours to public inspection; the irreparable loss science has probably sustained by this excessive diffidence they can attest to whom he freely but privately imparted the accumulated treasures

fures of his accurate investigations—how often have the ablest Masters of the Science which he taught, who laboured to acquire well merited fame by extending and improving it, on consulting him returned, instructed and enlightened indeed, but at the same time humbled and surprised, at finding that where they most prided themselves for their peculiar sagacity and their successful research, all their discoveries and improvements had been long silently anticipated or exceeded by his superior sagacity and more extended research, which he delighted to employ in facilitating their efforts, and promoting their success, while unanxious for fame he sought no recompence for his own labours, but in the sympathy of friendship, and the indulgence of benevolence.

But, though his unfeigned humility may have been carried too far perhaps for his celebrity as a literary character; when considered in the more important view of morality and religion, it exalted him I had almost said be-

yond all competition ; how highly must we revere the man who was universally judged most worthy of being placed at the head of this important seminary, who was called to it I may say by a whole nation's voice, and who yet shrunk back, from a diffidence of his own attainments, combined with an almost irreconcilable aversion from placing himself in a station so conspicuous : surely, if true greatness of talents and of soul, can ever be evinced, it is by at once deserving the highest honours and not desiring them ; it is by exhibiting merit which no competitor could presume to rival, and yet thinking so little of that merit as to decline all competition and lay claim to no reward.

But this singular humility did not display itself in this single instance alone, nor was it confined to a diffidence of his literary attainments ; it formed and regulated the entire moral character of this excellent person, so as to conciliate our warmest affection as men, and deserve our most sedulous imitation as Christians,

tians, it guarded him from every thing approaching to affectation or satire, from every thing like rivalry or contention ; he was ever a living example of obedience to the Apostolic precept, “ be ye mild and gentle in honour “ preferring one another,” his whole life exhibited one uninterrupted scene of pure serenity. —Never was his mind embittered by jealousy, or ruffled by opposition ; ever ready to encourage merit and to allow every man full praise for the merit he possessed, never once considering how any man thought of him ; he seemed like some exalted being who lifted high his head, above the storms of passion, and the fluctuations of vanity, which agitate and deform this inferior world ; and he enjoyed his full reward in that honour which in this instance attended him who humbled himself ; for surely no man was ever more universally respected ; but still more was he rewarded in the undisturbed composure of his own virtuous soul, his life was tranquility, and his death was peace.

When

When I praise his lowliness of soul, let me not be understood to represent him as of that unsteady self-distrusting turn of mind, which does not form any fixed opinion of its own, or pursue with decision any uniform line of conduct, but relies on the judgement of others and changes as they change; nor do I mean to state him as exempt from all warmth of temper, or incapable of being roused when a just cause required—I am rather disposed to believe that his passions were by nature strong, though so effectually subdued by habitual cautious self controul, that to common observers he seemed to be totally exempt from them; and his mind was originally like his frame, not only vigorous but perhaps rough, though gradually tempered by humility, and softened by benevolence—but those who knew him well have often seen his countenance light up with indignation at the usurpations of injustice, and the insolence of pride, and repell them with a sternness from which they shrunk with terror; and meek and calm as he generally appeared he yet deported himself with a
firm

firm dignity so evidently inaccessible to every undue influence and every undue fear, that I do not believe any man ever had the hardihood to propose to him, to engage, or to acquiesce in any inconsistent or dishonourable act. No man was more free from Indecision or fickleness; he formed his opinions cautiously, but when formed he carried them into effect, with a steadiness which clamour could not discompose, or danger terrify; he undertook the government of this university at a time when a spirit of innovation and discontent, of resistance to authority and contempt of established forms and powers, had inflamed the publick mind almost to madness; a spirit which could not but find a ready reception in the impetuosity of youthful passions, and the heat of youthful zeal; he continued to govern it through that fearful and agitated period; during which the fury of political contest, religious discord, and blood thirsty treason convulsed this unhappy land, when even the studious youth who were here sheltered beneath the peaceful

ful shade of academick retirement, were compelled to suspend their studies, and burst from their retreat to wield arms in their countries cause; yet during this trying time, he maintained with steady hand the authority of his office, and the dignity of his character: he not only preserved, but increased the strictness of academick discipline, his firmness controuled and over-awed the turbulent, his integrity and simplicity of heart, banished political party, and political intrigue, while his humility and mildness, his benevolence, and his piety commanded the esteem, and secured the submission of every party, and almost of every individual; the virtuous and loyal admired and loved, even the vicious and disaffected could not but respect him.

I have spoken of piety as a leading feature of this admirable character, it was indeed the source and guard of all his virtues, it was assuredly from a deep and heart-felt impression of Christian piety, that he derived
that

that singleness and simplicity of heart, that gentleness of spirit, that humility of soul, that pure integrity, that virtuous self-government which so eminently distinguished him; these are the genuine fruits and surest tests of true religion planted in the soul, true it is, his piety was calm and retired, unostentatious and unobtrusive; but surely it was not therefore less real and effective, yet retired and humble as it was, it manifested itself in various appropriate traits of character, too clear to be mistaken—In the zeal with which he inculcated religious instruction, whenever his academick situation, gave him an opportunity.—In the perseverance and success with which he prosecuted the study of the scriptures, and the extent and variety of his theological learning.—But most of all did his piety appear in the anxious care with which he promoted regular attendance on the public worship of God, by his precepts, his example, and his authority; here, he was peculiarly vigilant and active, every circumstance which could promote regularity and

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decency,

decency, which could fix attention, and assist devotion amongst the students, he was careful to provide for, but his own presence was ever the strongest excitement, to Christian devotion, as his own life afforded the most instructive and amiable example, of the practical effects which such devotion should produce.

One virtue of this our deplored friend, yet remains, which more than all the rest attracted general notice, and conciliated general affection, which gave polish and softness to every other, and compelled men to combine with the respect and veneration which his character extorted, a lively regard and affection, which scarcely any other man ever enjoyed to a greater extent; this was the *warmth of his benevolence, and the kindness of his heart*; though by habit detached from society, and spending much of his time in solitude, he was not soured into austerity, or chilled by selfishness.—No man entered into the feelings of others with more lively sympathy, remembered

bered and enquired into their minutest concerns, with more affectionate solicitude, partaking their comforts, and their sorrows with sincerity, ready to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep;" there was in his whole demeanour such unaffected mildness, such engaging attention, such overflowing benignity, that scarcely any individual of the multitude with whom he occasionally was conversant, who did not regard him with something of filial affection: Is there a single man in this assembly which I now address, whose heart does not bear witness to this part of his character?—I speak not of those who were honoured with his intimate friendship, and shared his peculiar confidence, whose agitated hearts at this instant, attest what a fatal rent has been made in their souls dearest happiness: I speak of us who were too far removed in years and situation, to share that high privilege; of all of us who partook at any time of his instructions, or submitted our progress in learning to his investigation; can we ever forget his

patience, his mildness, his condescension; can we forget that he devoted every faculty of his vigorous mind, to direct, to support, to encourage our first feeble steps in the paths of science, and enable us to penetrate with him the secret recesses of truth, and during the whole laborious progress, did we ever meet from him a rebuke or even a discouraging look to damp our youthful hopes—Did he not regard us with the tender solicitude of a friend and a father? I remember well the first time his venerable figure caught my attention, it was in the temple of God while he was employed in dispensing religious instruction to the younger students, of whom I was one, I had stepped in by accident, but having once heard his instructions, I was afterwards almost irresistibly compelled to return again to listen to them, so attractive was his mildness, his condescension, so evidently did he shew even to the giddiness of youth, the importance of attending to the evidence, and the truths of Religion. And oh! that I had possessed the foresight, to record and preserve
for

for my own use the treasures of religious knowledge which he then dispensed; but I never shall forget that he honoured me with his notice, that he spoke of me favourably to a brother, that he encouraged my emulation, that he ever since treated me with uniform kindness, and never shall I cease to deplore his loss with heart-felt sorrow, and regard his memory with heart-felt veneration; there may have been literary characters more celebrated, publick men more enterprising, and distinguished; but I will venture to assert, there scarcely ever was a man whose judgment was more solid, whose labours were more useful, whose life was more conformable to the spirit of Gospel Faith, and Gospel Morality; thus did he pass through this world, full as it is of guilt and pollution, pure and uncontaminated; for years he exhibited a living example, how respectable, how amiable, how blessed was virtue, unmixed, unostentatious virtue.—Mild, affable, condescending, sincere, humble, pious, benevolent; the promoter of science, the lover of truth,

truth, the support of academick order and discipline, the prop and stay of this important seminary, respected in manhood, revered in age, deplored in death; his tomb will be crowned with the wreath of learning, and his memory consecrated by the gratitude of virtue.

One word more and I have done, let us not suppose my brethren that we have fulfilled all that such a crisis as this requires, by resting in vain lamentations, and indulging the indolence of dejection—no, we have to fulfil important duties to the University, and to ourselves.—This useful institution deprived of its venerable guardian and governor, has sustained a loss great, and striking, a loss I will not say *irreparable*, but such as to repair it calls for the united exertions of all who possess any interest, or any influence in its prosperity; we have undoubtedly the strongest confidence in the paternal care of our gracious Sovereign, that our loss in this most important point, will be supplied by an appointment as nearly as possible

possible similar to the last; an appointment calculated like that, to reward academick merit, encourage academick exertion, promote amongst us, order, tranquility, and religion, and banish far from this venerable seminary political contest, and political intrigue; but suppose such an appointment were this instant decided, it would be still incumbent on all who bear any part in this important institution, to double their usual exertions for preserving its discipline, animating its exertions, and sustaining its reputation; for much are all endangered, deprived as they are by this deplorable event of their surest support.

Such my academick brethren is our peculiar duty, but as rational and accountable beings as men and christians; I would entreat all who hear me, to propose to themselves his life, whose loss we this day mourn, as the model of their own; to imitate those virtues we cannot but approve, to transfuse into their own hearts, a portion of that spirit we have in him contemplated and revered.—

Oh!

Oh! then my fellow christians, study to attain that sincerity and singleness of heart, which was the basis of his venerable character, study to detach yourselves from worldly mindedness and ambition, to pursue like him your duty; and look to God for your reward; learn like him to think humbly of your merits and attainments, to avoid the jealousy of rivalry, and the bitterness of contention, which springs from selfishness, and is nurtured by pride; learn from him steady integrity, rational piety, and christian benevolence, so shall you live like him, respected of men, and die like him approved of God.—That we all may so live, and so close our lives, that we may die the death of the righteous, and that our last end may be like his; may God of his infinite mercy, grant through the merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee, Oh! Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and Glory, now and for ever.

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